

*Dulce et Decorum Est*¹

Wilfred Owen (1893-1918)

1 Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
2 Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,
3 'Til on the haunting flares we turned our backs
4 And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
5 Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots,
6 But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;
7 Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
8 Of tired, outstripped Five-Nines that dropped behind.
9
10 Gas! Gas! Quick, boys! – An ecstasy of fumbling,
11 Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;
12 But someone still was yelling out and stumbling
13 And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime...
14 Dim through the misty panes and thick green light,
15 As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.
16
17 In all my dreams before my helpless sight,
18 He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.
19
20 If in some smothering dreams, you too could pace
21 Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
22 And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
23 His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;
24 If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
25 Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
26 Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
27 Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues –
28 My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
29 To children ardent for some desperate glory,
30 The old Lie: *Dulce et decorum est*
31 *Pro patria mori*.

Dulce et decorum est Pro Patria mori is from Horace. Owen wrote in a letter to his mother: “The famous Latin tag means of course, *It is sweet and decorous to die for one's country*. Sweet! and decorous!

¹ Written in 1917 and first published in 1920, the poem can be found in: Stallworthy, Jon, *Wilfred Owen*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1974.

***In Flanders Fields*²**

Lt. Colonel John McCrae, MD, Canadian Army (1872-1918)

1 In Flanders Fields the poppies blow
2 Between the crosses row on row,
3 That mark our place; and in the sky
4 The larks, still bravely singing, fly
5 Scarce heard amid the guns below.

6
7 We are the Dead. Short days ago
8 We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
9 Loved and were loved, and now we lie
10 In Flanders Fields.

11
12 Take up our quarrel with the foe:
13 To you from failing hands we throw
14 The torch: be yours to hold it high.
15 If ye break faith with us who die,
16 We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
17 In Flanders Fields.

² From *Arlington National Cemetery Website*; <http://www.arlingtoncemetery.net/flanders.htm>